



TOWN of NEEDHAM
MASSACHUSETTS

PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
Economic Development
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MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF ECONOMIC ADVISORS
WEDNESDAY, September 10, 2014 7:30 AM
Charles River Room PSAB

Present: Glen Cammarano; Marty Jacobs; Michael Wilcox; Rick Putprush; Elizabeth Grimes; Peter Atallah; Bill Day; Bob Hentschel; and Devra Bailin, staff

Not Present: Matt Talcoff, Chair; Moe Handel; Tom Jacob; Janet O'Connor; Bruce Herman; Brian Nadler; Matt Borrelli; and Lee Newman

Also Present: Denise Garlick and Simon Boyd

I. Approval of Minutes

The members approved the minutes for the meeting of June 17, 2014.

II. Reminder of Next Meeting and Hearing Dates

Our next meeting will be on October 1st. All meetings will be in the Charles River Room at PSAB.

III. Update on Mixed Use-128 Residential Overlay

Devra provided the members with her draft of the Overlay and preliminary fiscal analysis. Devra explained the basic provisions and discussed the need to closely review the highlighted provisions. Most of the members had not had the opportunity to review the drafts Devra had emailed but all agreed that **they should be forwarded by the Planning Department to Phil Herr**, who was the expert retained by the Department to do this work. Marty will discuss his comments with Devra after the meeting.

IV. Update on Industrial District Subcommittee

Devra provided the members with a copy of the memorandum she will provide to the Needham Heights Association, with whom she is meeting on September 15th. Devra noted that we are still waiting for **Ben Anderson to provide the elevations of the areas via GIS**. Devra will then ask Mark Gluesing if he could create a few cardboard buildings which would demonstrate the elevations. Devra is also waiting for the **Planning Department to arrange for a traffic study to be done based on the proposed zoning**. Devra will present the proposed zoning to the Needham Heights Association and seek additional comments.

V. Report on Joint Meeting with Newton's EDC

Devra explained that last night, members of the CEA (Marty Jacobs, Mike Wilcox, Moe Handel, Matt Talcoff, and Rick Putprush), together with Devra and Lee Newman, met with Newton's Economic Development Commission. The topics ranged from the N2 Innovation Corridor to Add-A-Lane and the Highland Avenue/Needham Street corridor to local first initiatives. There was much excitement about the on-going cooperation in the N2 initiatives. Greg Reibman and Chris Steel explained about the efforts to obtain an EDA Local Technical Assistance grant from the federal government. There was discussion of the timelines for the infrastructure work and concerns that the slow pace was negatively impacting development in both communities. Members of both groups agreed that it was a very positive meeting and that they should continue to meet in the future. It was suggested that both communities should get their State representatives involved with efforts to expedite infrastructure work. At our meeting, it was thought that Newton's representatives might not be fully informed on the importance of these efforts.

VI. Discussion of Request from BOS on Recommendations to Improve Business Relationships

Members noted that that is what the CEA has been and will continue to do. It was unclear what the BOS sought—a list of everything we've done or are working on? One member suggested and the rest agreed that we need to know whether the BOS had any particular issues or problems in mind in asking for such recommendations. Devra will email Kate. Rick Putprush will also reach out to members of the NBA to obtain direct business input.

VII. Update on Needham Crossing Work

Given the lack of funds to independently support a website, members suggested Devra contact Greg about creating the landing page for Needham Crossing on the NNCC website. [Devra did so and he has enthusiastically agreed; he will work directly with Tina Snyder of the Bulfinch Companies to create the page.] Mike noted that there is a problem with illegal signs in the area—a lot of temporary signage that becomes rather permanent. There was discussion of the need for clear signage off the highway, which the BOS is working on. We also need gateway signs; Devra spoke to Jon Feder about locations and look and he's reviewing it.

VIII. Update on Downtown Subcommittee (Streamlining Suggestions)

Members of the Downtown Subcommittee are meeting with members of the Planning Board to discuss moving forward with additional streamlining efforts. Included are: insignificant modifications post construction, boiler plate provisions in decisions, moratorium on requiring parking studies for restaurants and other businesses in the Downtown, administrative transfer of restaurant special permits, and other proposals to simplify the process by making it more administrative. Simon noted that permitting in the Building Department has much improved since David Roche became Building Commissioner.

IX. Update on Babson Application for Detailed Marketing Plan

Devra noted that she will be meeting with the Babson MCFE students tomorrow night (September 11th). Rick noted that a major component missing from the downtown is some sort of on-going entertainment. [At her initial meeting, Babson students threw out some ideas to improve the downtown and one of them was an on-going film festival at Town Hall. Great minds...]

X. Update on Town Meeting

Two basically corrective By-Law proposals will be made. The first would allow personal fitness establishments in Industrial 1. The second will allow outdoor restaurant seating in districts other than the downtown and Avery Square. **It was also discussed that the outdoor seating provisions should be expanded to apply to all restaurants at Town Meeting in the fall.** The Planning Board declined to bring forward the minimum side and rear setbacks for accessory structures requested by David Roche and Devra—this provision would require any accessory structures over 15' in height to be located within the setback for the zoning district rather than 5' from the property line.

XI. Other Business

There was a brief discussion of the General Dynamics project. Devra explained that she understood a deal is being finalized.

XII. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:15 a.m.